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AN

EPISTLE

TO

All that profeſs the Light of

Jeſus Chriſt

WITHIN

To be their GUIDE.

By *JOHN CROOK.*

LONDON,

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Francis Fry. Esq

To all that Profeſs the Light of Jeſus Chriſt (within) to be their Guide, Greeting.

Dear Friends, Brethren, and Siſters,

THat believe in the inward, and ſpiritual Grace, which is *the Light* of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, I ſalute you all, deſiring, that as we *received Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, we may all* [*ſo*] *walk in him.* In order hereunto let us all watch, and be mindful how we received the truth at the beginning, which is the ſubject matter upon my Heart, by this Epiſtle to ſignifie unto you.

For you know, many of us before we received the *Truth* (*as it is in Jeſus*) felt ſome ſtirrings of Life, and therefore ſeparated in our Judgments, and Opinions from the generality of our Neighbours, and Country men where we dwelt: becauſe of an inward *cry* from

a deep want in our Souls, and hungering after the constant enjoyment of [that] which [we] with many others professed; but could not find in any thing *under the Sun*.

So poor and needy were we, that the dealing sof *God* with our Spirits in that day, in some sense may be said to resemble God's proceedings with *Adam*, when he set all the creatures before him, before he gave him a meet-helper, that when he saw he could find out no fit helper for himself amongst them all, he might make the more account of the *meet helper* that was [after] given him of *God*.

So it was inwardly with us, until that *Trumpet* sounded which directed our minds to the light of *Christ Jesus* in our own Hearts and Consciences, which when we believed the *report*, and made tryal of its *sufficiency*, we soon found the *meet helper* for our souls (to wit) the *Arm of the Lord to be revealed* in [it] and made [so] *bare*, that we knew it to be the *Lords own Arm*, which brought deliverance to us.

But not from all our enemies at once,

yet

yet [so] that we understood plainly, (by certain experience) that the tendency thereof, and the end of its being made *bare*, was in order to deliver *us out of the hands of* [*all*] *our enemies, that being delivered, we might serve God without a tormenting, distrustful fear in holiness, and righteousness before* [*him*] *all the days of our lives.*

And the way thereunto, was by the working of this *Arm* of power in our inward parts, to make a separation [within] between the precious and the vile within, and between our own spirits, and *Gods Spirit*; between our own wills and *Gods will*; between our own thoughts and *Gods thoughts*; and our own ways, and *Gods ways* &c.

So that we found the great business of *Regeneration and Restauration* was to be wrought [within] us; and what sorrow, what trouble, what horror, what distress, *what wars, and rumors of wars*, was [within us] many knows; and what *earthquakes* was in divers hearts (which might occasion the name QUAKER to be given some of us) those that were *eye-witnessed from the* be-

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ginning are not ignorant of these things.

O what carefulness, what watchfulness, what circumspection, what awfulness of God, and what dread of his Power was upon our Spirits, lest we should speak our own words, work our own works, walk in our [own] ways, or think our [own] thoughts; so diligently did we keep a watching, and over our own hearts, being conscious to our selves, that we should give an account for every idle word, which caused us to learn *a bridle for our tongues, that our words might be few, and savory, ministring grace to the hearers.*

How solid were our looks? how grave were our countenances, how serious were our carriages? And how exemplary our behaviours, and conversations amongst all that we conversed with? lest we should give occasion for any to speak evil of the blessed truth of the Living God.

And if any, tho' but newly convinced thereof, walked disorderly, or that took up their *rest* in a [bare] convincement, and came not to be converted to *the Life*,

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and Power of God in their own particular (which at the beginning was ſoon diſcovered by that *Spirit of diſcerning* which in the *Light* we received from *God*)

How conſcienciouſly ſolicitous were we, to admoniſh, inſtruct, adviſe, & counſel them to take heed of a falſe *Reſt*, or running into, or doing any thing by [bare] imitation from others: Yet how tender were we, of bruiſing, hurting, ſtopping, or hindring any ſtirrings of *Light and Life*, leſt *the Lame ſhould be turned out of the Way*, or the feeble be left behind.

The Spirit of Holy *David* was in our Hearts, who would not conſent that the *ſore, and weary ones* (*that could not get over the River* Bezor, *ſhould loſe their part of the prey, becauſe they tarried with the ſtuff*; but made it a *Law, and a Statute in* Iſrael *for ever, that they ſhould have part alike.*

And how did we love, and pity thoſe, that took pleaſure in the *Stones of* Zion, *and favoured the duſt thereof?* What carefulneſs was upon us for them; and if we found any but like the *young man* (in *Mark* 19. 22.) that had been Religiouſly

giously inclined from their *Youth*, how did we love them? Watching for opportunities to communicate some Spiritual advice unto them.

As if the new *kindred that Christ* speaks of, *Mat.* 12. (to wit) *Whosoever shall do my Fathers Will (the same is my Mother, Sister, and Brother)* was now discovered again, and the *Beauties of Holiness* were now made manifest, with the many glorious priviledges enjoyed thereby; as to see clearly, and know certainly the *Living God*; for hereby came we *to know* [*that we knew him*] because of the *Beauties of Holiness*, in keeping close to [his *Commandments*] whereby our love to God, and one to another was manifest unto all.

For we durst not let in distrustful thoughts of *God*, nor one of another; Faith in him [then] becoming our *Law*; so that our care was stedfastly, and constantly to believe in the *Light*, by which we had seen him, and to dwell in a holy fear, lest we should transgress *the Law of Faith*, by which *Christ was* [*then*] *kept dwelling in our Hearts*, and all *boasting* of SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS was utterly *excluded*.

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But with how much difficulty we kept [that] Faith, you only know, who like valiant Souldiers have *endured hardſhip in the good Fight of Faith*, whereby we our ſelves were preſerved, and *kept by the power of God through Faith*, that we might (in due time) *receive the end of our Faith* (for we had nothing elſe in our Eye, but to be ſaved from *Sin*) [to wit] *the Salvation of our Souls*.

And then, becauſe we believed *in the Power*, as we were moved of [it] we ſpake by [it] and [ſuch words] like *Jonathan's Bow, never returned empty*, but wounded the *Hypocrites*; like the *man that ſhot the Arrow out of ſimplicity*, which ſmote *diſguiſed* Ahab *between the harneſs*; ſo that he *died according to the word of the Lord by* Micaiah.

You may remember alſo, how like *Ephraim* (at firſt) we were *as little Children, and ſpake trembling*; ſaying often in our Hearts, as *Jacob* did of the *Mountain* where *God* appeared (to wit) *how dreadful is this place*, and [then] how quick, and powerful were [thoſe words] that proceeded from that *dread of God* in our Hearts.

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The great *myſtery* of the *falſe Prophet*, that rides upon the Beaſt, being [then] inwardly diſcovered, with the *myſtery of his name, and number thereof* (to wit) *the number of a Man*; which cauſed us at the *beginning* ſo to cry down vain, corrupt Man, both in our ſelves, and others; feeling that [*God*] was riſen in [his] *Power, to confound its wiſdom*, and to bring his *fleſhly Prudence and Policy to nothing*: Therefore we feared the getting up of that *mans-part* in our ſelves, being ſo battered by the inward *Judgments of God* upon our ſelves.

That with good *Jehoſaphat* we ſaid in our Hearts, *We know not what to do, but our Eyes are towards thee, O God*; then in this *valley* of helpleſneſs, ſtraights, poverty, lowlineſs, and humility, God pleaded with our *fleſhly parts*; ſo that in the day of our diſtreſs, although we multiplied our ſervices, and *doubled* our offerings and obſervations, to obtain Relief; yet Chriſt refuſed all theſe our works, that he might [freely] make himſelf known unto us (which in due time he did) as *Joſeph unto his Brethren* (and ſaith that *Scripture*) *there ſtood no*

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man with him, when he made himself known unto them; to the exalting of the *riches of the Glory of his Grace* [in us] whereby ſorrow fled away, and our own mournful Spirits were now made *to rejoyce in God*, and our formerly troubled Souls began now *to magnifie our Saviour*.

Thus *former things paſſed away*, till the tempeſtous *Sea* was no more; but joy and gladneſs was in our dwellings, and the Voice of Melody in all our *Hearts*, and in the midſt of all our *Aſſemblies*.

But before we came hither, you know (fellow-Travellers) that *Mount Sinai* was firſt in our way, where we tarried a while, and felt the entertainment of her Flames, and heard *the voice of Words, and the ſound of her Trumpets*, and were witneſſes of her terrible *Earthquakes* [yet fled not] but with *Moſes*, a Remnant *drew near unto the thick Darkneſs, where God was*: But others made this *Mountain* the end of their Journey, eſcaping with their *Lives* ſtill in their own doings: yet theſe, though they might in Profeſſion come out with us, thus far they

they were not of us, and (in time) will go out from us, that it may appear, they came not through [all] *the Tribulations* that a Remnant went through.

For from thence a Remnant came unto the Miniſtration of the *Prophets*, where they met with openings, and *propheſies* of good things [yet] to come, before they did come: And here others fled as on the *Sabbath Day*, as if [now] all labour was at an end, and here they took up their reſt, (but *God* did not *Sanctifie it*) and therefore Glorying and Pride got up in theſe; Boaſting in the GIFTED-MAN, ſoon forgetting all *dependance* upon the opener, *viz. The Spirit of Truth*, to exerciſe their Hearts and Tongues in the Management of all, for the Glory of God, and Refreſhment of his own *Seed* in the Hearts of his People.

But a Remnant ſtill Travelling on, through *John Baptiſt's Cry in the Wilderneſs* (*Make ſtraight the Way of the Lord*) and come to Repentance for all their dead Words and Works, *that every Valley might be filled, and every Mountain, and Hill brought low, and the crooked made ſtraight,*

ſtraight, and the rough ways made ſmooth; then came we to ſee the *Salvation of God* (to wit) the *Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of the World*, whom then we followed, leaving [*John*] as ſome of his [own] *Diſciples* did.

Some alſo came with us, as far as *John's Baptiſm, that waſheth away the filth of the Fleſh*; but not coming to the *Baptiſm of Chriſt, which waſheth all Filthineſs, both of Fleſh and Spirit*; alſo they left us at *John*: Such as theſe may be compared to the *King of* Iſrael, *who at the command of the Prophet, ſmote the Ground often; but not ſmiting it long enough* (until the Enemy was conſumed) he miſſed of *a perfect Victory, and full Conqueſt*: So do all that take up their *Reſt* in any thing ſhort *of the Lamb of God.*

Theſe things being thus witneſſed in the Spiritual Travels of a Remnant at the *beginning*, let us all ſearch and try our Ways, whether we be ſtill *following the antient Foot-ſteps of the Flocks of the Companions*, by keeping in the pure ſeparation from the fleſhly parts in our ſelves, miniſtring [only] from the *Ability that God gives*, which a Remnant that have kept

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to their first love, and their Garments clean therein, have done to the praise of the Lord God Almighty for ever.

My exhortation therefore is unto all, but more especially to you that are Children of believing Parents, and Servants to believing Masters, with all the younger Men, and younger Women, convinced in these latter times (knowing that a Remnant of these also have kept their Garments clean) to *examine your selves* how you came by your Profession? Whether you that are Children, and Servants, received it by Tradition, only because of your outward Relations, *&c.* Or from the inward Work of God upon your own Spirits, as those did that received the Truth (*in the Love of God*) at the beginning.

For many may endure *Suffering*, and undergo the *Reproach* of a QUAKER; and all for sinister ends; as the *Shechemites endured the Pain of Circumcision, to obtain* Dinah, Jacobs *Daughter*, and to accomplish their other ends, and interest: On these terms they were willing to be one *People with the* Israelites; as too many, on like Conditions, at this day, may be willing to

to be called QUAKERS; to whom I say, as *Jacob* did to *Simeon* and *Levi*, *You have troubled us*, and (as much as in you lies) *have made us to stink amongst the inhabitants of the Land*; (yet a remnant dare not do so, blessed be the Lord.)

But to you that are *grieved, and troubled*, because of these *Shechemites*, I say to you also, as the *Lord* on this occasion said unto *troubled* Jacob, *Arise, let* [*us*] *go up to Bethel* (the house of God) *and dwell there Gen.* 35. (where no *Shechemites* can come.)

O the bemoanings of many tender Souls [at the beginning] for the loss of their conditions, sometimes through their own negligence, and sometimes through the enemies subtilty (*weeping like* Rachel *for her Children, and refusing to be comforted, because they were not*) are fresh in my Remembrance.

But of later times many come amongst us, that in outward appearance may seem to be of us, who as yet never truly knew the meaning of such *bemoanings*, nor the bitterness of *Rachels* tears, but walk as if the *gate* of entrance in to *the Truth*, was grown wider,

der, and the *Path, and Way thereof, broader* then [it] was at the *beginning*; For how careful were those that came tō witness [the Truth] at the beginning to keep *low, and humble*, that they might not be drawn from their *own measures*, lest their [own] words should become their burden, and they be condemned in themselves, for uttering that (as *in the Name* of *God*) which came not from the *Spirit of the Living God.*

Therefore it was that *so mightily grew the word of God, and Prospered* (bringing all down *to the loathing of their persons* in true *Humility*) growing up in every honest heart, *that the fruits of the Spirit were manifest*, as in the Apostles days (*to wit*) *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*; *Against such there is no Law*, saith the Apostle: *And they that are Christs have Crucified the Flesh, with the Affections. If we live in the Spirit let us all so walk in the Spirit, let us not be desirous* (saith the Apostle) *of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another*, &c.

But like Brethren (saith the Apostle) *if a man be overtaken in a Fault, ye which*

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are Spiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the Spirit of meekneſs, conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted, bear ye one anothers burdens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt.

My heart is overcome when I take a view of God's dealings with us from the day that he firſt viſited us unto this preſent time; *My dear Friends and Brethren*, you know how *Chriſt* (*our* Joſeph) *knew us when we knew not him, and made himſelf known to us* (*as* Joſeph *did unto his brethren*) while guilt, and fear; diſtruſt, and horror was in their Spirits, and then commanded, that they ſhould do unto, and one for another, as he had done unto, and for them all.

Therefore let all come down to the Remembrancer, the Spirit of Truth, which will diſtinguiſh between thoſe that are now arrayed with the *Beautiful Garments of their Youthful Days*, viz. humility, meekneſs, righteouſneſs, and the true zeal of the Lord, and thoſe that have only a ſhew of it; and there let [us] behold one another, in our comely attire, as with the lovely *Coat of Joſeph* upon our Backs, and the Glorious *Viſions of the Almighty* in our Hearts, Judging down all ſtirrings

of *Envyings, and Evil Surmiſings* againſt any; knowing right well, that all ſuch *Lowings, and Bleatings* are commanded to be ſlain: For can we conſider the *Price* we coſt at *firſt*, and the love, care, and watchfulneſs of our *God* over us unto this Day, of whom a Remnant can ſay (as *Jacob* did) (*He hath Fed us all our Life long*) and not be in love one with another.

Can we contemplate of the *Miſeries* we have been delivered from, and the *Mercies* we have been made partakers of, ſince we were a People, and not be *Humbled* before our *God*, for any unthankfulneſs and diſtruſt: Can we view the *Priſons*, and *Dungeons*, the *Baniſhments*, and all *outward Loſſes, and ſpoiling of our Goods*, with the *reproachful Scoffs, and ſcornful Slightings*, by ſuch, that ſome could ſay (with holy *Job*) *They were not worthy to Eat with the Dogs of their Flocks*, and not be melted before the *Lord*, and abaſed as *unworthy* of the leaſt of all his *Mercies*.

And can we remember our bleſſed Support under all thoſe *ſufferings*, and the ſweet *Preſence of the Spirit of Chriſt* in our Hearts, ſaying in us under all theſe *Tryals and Exerciſes*, as the *Diſciples* did, when

when they returned to Christ their Master, after their *weary Travels* (to wit) *We wanted nothing*, &c. We *wanted* no *perfumes* to take away the *noisome Smells*, we *wanted* nothing to make our *hard Lodging easie*, we *wanted no pleasant Walks* to make our *straight Confinements Joyous*, nor we *wanted not the Society* of outward *Relations*, and former *Acquaintance*, *to pass away the time*, because the *Lord our God* turned all our *Hardships* into *unspeakable* Comfort, and true *Contentment*.

And shall any now say, God's *Arm is shortned that it cannot Save, or his Ear is heavy that he cannot Hear? God forbid*, that all the *Milk, and Wine, and Honey*, and other *Fat things* (with which we have been often, *Spiritually feasted at God's Table*) should be all forgotten, and Buried in the *Wilderness*, saying in our selves, as rebellious *Israel* did of old (to wit) *Can he now Prepare such a Table in the Wilderness for us.*

But rather let us, with *Manoah*'s Wife, the Mother of *Sampson*, conclude, *If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a Burnt-Offering, and a Meat-Offering at our Hands; neither would he*

have ſhewed us all theſe things, and done ſo much for us, as he hath done from the very beginning, that we were a People unto this Day.

Therefore lift up your Heads, you *Valiants* of *Iſrael*, that have come through the *dark-Burning-Mountain*, and through the pleaſant and delightful *Openings*, and *Propheſies*, through, and beyond all outward *Waſhings*, unto the *Lamb* of *God*; that *your Robes may be waſhed White in his Blood*, that thereby you may *overcome*, and then ſit down in that *Kingdom which cannot be ſhaken*, with weary *Abraham*, throughly-tired *Iſaac*, and wreſtling *Jacob*.

O how glorious are you [all] in the ſight of God, and all his People, even as an *Army terrible with Banners* in the ſight of all Adverſaries; therefore keep your *Ranks*, and march on in your *Heavenly Way*, which the *Lord of Hoſts*, *himſelf hath ſet you in*, and *Babylon* the [great] ſhall fall before you, more and more, for the Lord of *Hoſts* hath ſpoken it; and you, with all the holy *Martyrs* of *Jeſus*, ſhall rejoyce over her down-fall for ever.

Theſe few words further and again, Springs up in my Heart to you all, dear

Friends,

Friends, Brethren, and Sisters, (to wit) that we may be always mindful how we received the Truth at the beginning, and be careful that we travel on with our *Feet* always *shod* with the same *Humility*, and *Poverty of Spirit* [as] when we were first *shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace.*

Never forgetting, nor changing the *Poor Man's Food* (to wit) our old *Water* and *Pulse*, for any *Portion* of the *Rich Man's Dainties*, but still waiting on God, that in due Season gives both Milk to Babes, and strong Meat to them of riper Age; bearing in our Remembrance the great execution that was done at the beginning, by the smooth Stones out of the poor Shepherd's Bag.

Now to the pure harmless Seed (that cries in our Hearts) I commend you all, that therein (as in the *Cleft* of [that] *Rock* against which the Gates of Hell shall never prevail) we all may dwell and abide for ever; so shall the Work of the Lord prosper to his own Glory, and all our Comforts for ever, *Amen.*

The 17th of the 6th Month, 1678. *John Crook.*

A

POSTSCRIPT.

SEE that you fall not out by the Way, was the Counsel and Advice of [once] an Afflicted *Brother*, to his Afflicting *Brethren*, and may at this time, be both Seasonable and Profitable unto all that professes Christ Jesus to be the way to true Blessedness and Peace, both in this World, and that which is to come.

Those that received the Truth, in the Love of it, knows how the Truth (as it is in Jesus) wrought in them, a holy Warfare against the working of Satan, in the Mystery of Iniquity, and against that Deceiveableness of Unrighteousness, which now worketh in all the Children of Disobedience unto it; although many are Ignorant thereof.

But the Faithful aud Spiritual minded, are still preserved through the Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth; and against these, the Gates of Hell shall never prevail: For they have right to the Tree of Life (which is Christ) and may enter through the Gates into the

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holy City, *for without are Doggs* (saith the Scripture) *who cannot clime over, for the Walls are high, and through the Gates can nothing come that works Abomination or makes a Lye.*

Therefore wonder not at evil Men's Snarling, and Barking at the Truth, and the Children of it: But if any be Strangers to this Experimental Working of the Truth in their Inward parts, and yet profess the Truth, they must have found a wider Gate, and a broader Way, than they were acquainted with, that received the Truth, in the Love of it, at the beginning.

Now if any Man Love not the Lord Jesus Christ (that no Man can say is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost) the Apostle hath declared his fearful Sentence in 1 *Cor.* 16. 22. compared with, 12. 3.

Therefore love, and like to retain him in your Knowledge, lest otherwise, you have only wise Heads, but foolish Hearts.

Dwell in the true Humility, that you may escape that Pride which goes before a Fall; and by a through self-denial and mortification of all its Members, you may be Christ's Disciples indeed, and always be found in him. There-

Therefore abide not in the ſuburbs and out-ſide of things; but dwell in the holy City, where the Riches and Glory of this World is ſeen through, and trampled upon; for the Streets thereof was pure Gold, as it were tranſparent Glaſs, ſaith the Scripture.

Therefore take heed of the Friendſhip of this World, leſt you become Guilty of Spiritual Whoredom and Adultery, before you are aware of it, as the Apoſtle *James* ſpeaks.

And laſtly, beware of Hypocriſie, that you may neither deceive your ſelves, nor others; which that black Art may eaſily do, and therefore Hypocriſie is truly, by Chriſt, compared to Leaven, that is not eaſily perceived from the Dough, but by the taſte.

Hertford, the 11*th* of the 9*th* Month, 1696. *John Crook.*

FINIS.